GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:126
ANSWERED ON:20.11.2000
SABARIMALA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
T. GOVINDAN

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government propose to allow the forest land to Travancore Devaswam Board in Kerala for the Sabarimala Development Project; and

(b) if so, details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T. R. BAALU)

(a) & (b) The Government of Kerala had earlier in 1993 submitted a proposal for diversion of 115.60-hectares of forest land under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 for providing amenities to pilgrims of Sabarimala Temple. While this proposal was under process, the State Government in December 1995 forwarded another proposal involving 20 hectares of forest land for the same purpose. The State Government was requested to carry out a study so as to minimise any adverse environmental effect of the development activity in the area and to prepare a long term Master Plan as majority of the forest area formed part of Periyar Tiger Reserve. Despite reminders, the State Government did not furnishthe required information. Meanwhile, the Ministryapproved diversion of 0.4225 hectare area in November 1998 for construction of sewage treatment plant at Cheriyanavottam as it was site-specific and for an eco-friendly use and 0.20 hectare for construction of a check-dam at Kunnar for water augmentation and allowed temporary use of 5.00 hectares at Pamba for parking facilities in February, .2000.

A Committee comprising Sh. O. Rajagopal, Hon`ble Union Minister of State andShri Ramesh Chennithala, M.P. had inspected the site on 26th & 27th March, 2000. The Committee has made detailed observations and suggested action on removal of unauthorised constructions and dumped garbage from Pamba, preparation of long term detailed master plan of the entire complex, action plan for pollution control of Pamba river, etc. The State Government has been requested to formulate a proposal accordingly for fresh consideration of the Ministry.